

METHYLCOBALAMIN EFFECT ON MECHANICAL BEHAVIOR ALLODYNIA IN RATS *SPRAGUE DAWLEY*

ENDANG MUTIAWATI

Neurology Department Faculty of Medicine Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Neuropathic pain is an expression of the nerve damage that impaired its excitability, such as increased excitability in the nerve lesion and surrounding healthy nerves as well. It is estimated that the incidence of neuropathic pain ranges between 2-40% of all adult men. Some neuropathic pain can not be cured, such as in patients with diabetes mellitus, trigeminal neuralgia, cervical syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome, lumbar stenosis, herniated nucleus pulposus and the carcinoma. The pathophysiology of neuropathic pain are complex and not fully understood. Methylcobalamin is a metabolite of vitamin B12 acts as a coenzyme in the formation of methionine from homocysteine. This reaction is useful in the formation of DNA, as well as maintenance of nerve function. Through the methylation reaction, methylcobalamin also plays a role in the formation of lecithin, a protein that plays an important role in the regeneration of peripheral nerves, including the formation of myelin. This study aimed to determine animal mechanical allodynia with or without the administration of methylcobalamin. Twenty male Sprague Dawley rats, aged 2 months, with an average weight of 150-250 g, obtained from the Laboratory LPPT Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. The mice were randomly divided into 4 groups, each consisting of 5 mice. All the rats, their fifth lumbar nerve were ligated. Group I was the control mice (C) 0.9% NaCl given, group II (M1) were given a dose of 50 microg methylcobalamin, group III (M2) were given a dose of 100 microg methylcobalamin, while group IV (M3) were given a dose of 150 microg methylcobalamin 13 weeks provision. For 13 weeks, neuropathic pain behavior was assessed. Neuropathic pain behavior in experimental animals observed about onset, duration and filaments Von Frey numbers that cause mechanical allodynia. Result of the study showed methylcobalamin influence the mechanical allodynia. Based on the results obtained, it is concluded that there was a reduction in neuropathic pain in the methylcobalamin group compared with the control group.

Keywords: Lumbar V spinal nerve ligation, neuropathic pain, methylcobalamin.

Introduction

Neuropathic pain is a degenerative disease that affects many elderly group. An increase in the elderly population (aging population) will increase the prevalence of neuropathic pain in the group. These conditions will have an impact on health care costs, disruption of daily activities, emotional health, and decreased productivity of patients (Harden, 2005; Raja, 2005).

Degenerative disease of the nerve cells is the presence of a degeneration of nerve cells function without a known cause, from the normal state to a worse situation. The cause of the disease is often not known, including the group of diseases that are influenced by genetic factors, or at least occurs in one of the family members (familial factors), so often referred as *heredodegeneratif* disease. Cowers, in 1902, proposed the term *abiotrophy* for the disease, which means showed a decrease in resistance of neuronal cells and lead to premature death of nerve cells.

The International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) defines neuropathic pain as pain that preceded or caused by a primary lesion or dysfunction of the nervous system, due to the central and peripheral nerve disorders. These disorders can be caused by compression, cuts,

infiltration, ischemic, or metabolic disturbances of nerve cells, or any combination thereof. (Suharjani, 2010; Meliala, 2008).

The incidence of neuropathic pain is estimated to range between 2-40% of all adult men. In the United States the number of cases of patients with neuropathic pain is estimated to reach 3.75 million total cases of chronic neuropathic pain, including that caused by carcinoma, spinal cord injury, back pain and phantom pain. Records of health insurance in the USA show recurrent pain from low back pain and facial pain about 45% of the entire record of the existing pain. In the UK, approximately 25% of patients in pain clinics suffer from neuropathic pain. (Harden, 2006).

Other reports suggested that neuropathic pain found one sixth of the total population (Xie, 2005). The majority of patients with neuropathic pain experience pain throughout his life, this is because the causes of the pain cannot be cured, such as diabetes mellitus, trigeminal neuralgia, cervical syndrome, carpal tunnel syndrome, lumbar stenosis, herniated nucleus pulposus and carcinoma.

Pathophysiology of neuropathic pain is very complex and not yet fully known. Many theories have been proposed, but not fully understood. The existence of injury to peripheral nerve conduction of pain will lead to abnormal activity of afferent fibers, namely ectopic discharge. The presence of ectopic discharge can cause continuous pain, resulting in peripheral and central sensitization. (Baron, 2009; Decosterd & Berta, 2009; Ossipov & Porreca, 2009; Dupere *et al.*, 2005; McMahon *et al.*, 2004; Dworkin *et al.*, 2003; Meliala & Barus, 2003; Bridgs *et al.*, 2001).

Carbamazepine is a drug that is widely used for the treatment of neuropathic pain. Other drugs that are widely used for the treatment of neuropathic pain are amitriptyline, gabapentin, pregabalin, tramadol, and others. Drugs are only for symptomatic treatment and they have side effects such as headache, dizziness, vertigo, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, and even can cause allergic reactions such as Steven Johnson Syndrome (Baron, 2009; Decosterd dan Berta, 2009; Ossipov & Porreca, 2009; Dupere *et al.*, 2005; McMahon *et al.*, 2004; Dworkin *et al.*, 2003; Meliala, 2008; Bridgs *et al.*, 2001). The use of these drugs for the treatment of neuropathic pain is still not satisfactory, only less than 50% of patients who improved (Bridgs *et al.*, 2001; Suharjani, 2010), which means that so far no drug was capable of giving satisfactory results against neuropathic pain. On the other hand many studies found evidence which indicates regression of pain in patients with neuropathic pain who were given methylcobalamin, such as trigeminal neuralgia, occipital neuralgia, post-herpetic neuralgia. Administration of methylcobalamin also reduces pain in cases of low back pain caused by lumbar-spinal canal stenosis, lumbar spondylosis, sciatic radicular neuralgia, and herniated nucleus pulposus (Meliala & Barus, 2008).

Methylcobalamin is a metabolite of vitamin B12 that acts as a coenzyme in the formation of methionine from homocysteine. This reaction is useful in the formation of DNA, as well as maintenance of nerve cell function. Through the methylation reaction, methylcobalamin also plays a role in the formation of lecithin, a protein that plays an important role in the regeneration of peripheral nerves including myelin formation (Björkegren, 2008; Meliala and Barus, 2008; Kräutler, 1998).

Based on the facts above, the researcher is interested in knowing the effect of methylcobalamin on neuropathic pain behavior in Sprague Dawley rats were ligated fifth lumbar spinal nerves as an alternative in the primary treatment of neuropathic pain.

Materials and Methods

This study is an experimental study in animals with methylcobalamin as the independent variable and neuropathic pain behavior as the dependent variable. Twenty Sprague Dawley rats, aged 2 months, with a mean weight of 150-250 grams, which are obtained from LPPT Laboratory

of Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, used in this study. Rats were adapted to the experimental cage for 1 week with standard feed consumption and water ad libitum. After the adaptation period is complete, the 5th lumbar nerve of mice were ligated using the same method and then were randomly divided into 4 groups consist of 5 rats in each group.

Group I was the control rats (C) were given 0.9% NaCl as scheduled administration of methylcobalamin IM intramuscular (IM) in the other groups of mice. Group II (M1) is the mice treated with the 50 mg dose methylcobalamin IM 2x/week, group III (M2) is the mice treated with a dose of 100 mcg methylcobalamin, while group IV (M3) is rats given a dose of 150 mcg methylcobalamin in intramuscular 2x/week.

In summary, the study design can be seen in Table 1 below. Examination of neuropathic pain behavior of Sprague Dawley is the examination of mechanical allodynia. Assessment include; onset arise, length, and von Frey filament number that cause mechanical allodynia.

Table I : Table Design Study

Groups	Treatment			NaCl 0.9% (IM times week)	Parameter analysis
	Surgery	SNL (spinal nerve ligation)	methylcobalamin (IM 2 times a week)		
K	+	+	-	+	+
M1	+	+	50 µg	-	+
M2	+	+	100 µg	-	+
M3	+	+	150 µg	-	+

Rats were maintained for 13 weeks, observations were made of the behavior associated with pain using von Frey filaments on the first, third and fifth day, after the fifth lumbar nerve ligation, and at the end of each week.

Mechanical hypersensitivity was assessed using von Frey filaments gradation series. Von Frey filaments were slowly pressed perpendicularly into the skin of experimental animals, until the filament began to bend. The first assessment was done on the leg that had the procedure SNL and then on a healthy foot. The frequency of the stimulus was done about 1 times per second and each intensity performed 5-10 times. The assessment was conducted on the day 1, 3, 5, 7, 14, and then each end of next week according to research that was done by Persson (2009). Comparisons between groups of neuropathic pain behavior in experimental animals were analyzed using ANOVA.

Results and Discussion

Onset of mechanical allodynia

The results of the initial examination of the onset of mechanical allodynia in each group is different. Mechanical allodynia in Group K appears on average at day 5.4 (SD 1.67, minimum 3, maximum 7), the average M1 group at day 4.6 (SD 2.19; minimum 3, maximum 7), the average M2 group on day 9 (SD 4.64; minimum of 5, maximum of 14) and M3 on average 8.6 days (SD 4.6; minimum of 5, maximum of 14).

In group M2 and M3 was found the average initial onset of mechanical allodynia longer than the group K and M1, whereas in the M1 group was found the average start earlier onset of mechanical allodynia of the group K, it can be concluded that, descriptively, methylcobalamin can prolong the onset of mechanical allodynia, the dose of methylcobalamin that was given in group M2 is to the dose that has been quite effective in prolonging the onset of mechanical allodynia.

Statistical analysis that were conducted on group K and M2 showed no significant difference ($p = 0.141$), this was because the number of samples from each group is few and data of the first onset of mechanical allodynia highly varies (wide range) either in each group and between groups. The reason of statistical analysis was conducted among a group of K with group M2 due to in the M2 group there were some differences in the initial onset of mechanical allodynia.

This study showed differences on the first onset of mechanical allodynia in rats from each group. The average of the first onset of mechanical allodynia (descriptively) group K earlier than M2 and M3 groups, but the average group M1 is lower than the average group of K. This suggests that the dose of methylcobalamin was given to the M1 does not slow the onset of mechanical allodynia, methylcobalamin dosage given in the M2 group was able to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia.

The given dose of methylcobalamin in M3 group was able to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia compared to group K and M1 but not able to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia compared to the average in the M2 group. This fact showed that a given dose methylcobalamin on M2 group has been effective in slowing the onset of mechanical allodynia.

On the third day, the rats in group M1 raised more mechanical allodynia than in the control group. This were due to 1) the dose in M1 group is not effective to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia, 2) length of exposure to methylcobalamin on rat in M1 group is very short (only 3 days), 3) nerve regeneration phase on day three finishes, cleaning debris by microglia phase and has not yet occurred sinaptogenesis (Colman & Carl, 1999) so that the administration of methylcobalamin has not been influential in the regeneration of peripheral nerve cells.

On the seventh day, rats in groups M2 and M3 experiencing mechanical allodynia by the same amount (3 mice). This condition indicates that the dose methylcobalamin on M3 group was not able to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia compared to M2 group. It is also seen in the mean onset of mechanical allodynia M3 group was not higher than the mean onset of mechanical allodynia group M2, furthermore M3 group mean even lower than the mean of the group M2. It is explained that the increase in dose of methylcobalamin on M3 group was not able to increase the difference in slowing the onset of mechanical allodynia of the group M2. The same phenomenon is also seen between the groups K with M1 group, showed an increase in dose of 50 mg of methylcobalamin was not able to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia, but the difference in dose of 100 mg was able to slow the onset of mechanical allodynia.

Mechanical allodynia results from hyperexcitability of the nervous system. Hyperexcitability caused by ectopic discharge that occurs because of the accumulation of the neurotransmitter VGSC activity along the newly formed lesion area that ultimately arise ectopic generator. Continuous ectopic generator sends impulses to the dorsal ganglion radix, to the dorsal horn and finally to the central nervous system that will cause peripheral and central sensitization. Finally, the process arises mechanical allodynia (Baron, 2009; Corderre, 2009).

Onset of mechanical allodynia varies, as does sprouting and neuroma formation, ie within a few hours to several days (Meliala, 2008; Dunteman, 2004; Attlal, 2000; Devor & Seltzer, 1999). Due to the time span of sprouting and neuroma formation is very wide (several hours to several days), this led to the emergence of mechanical allodynia was also highly varies, so that the data appears very varies and it is not able to show statistically significant results.

The duration of Mechanical Allodynia

The results of examination of the duration of mechanical allodynia within group K are: first rat 6 weeks 3 days, second rat 5 weeks 3 days, third rat 5 weeks 5 days, fourth rat 6

weeks, and fifth rat 7 weeks 5 days. In the M1 group, the duration of mechanical allodynia in first rats 6 weeks 5 days, second rat 1 week 5 days, third rat 8 weeks 3 days, fourth rat 5 weeks 5 days, fifth rat 4 weeks 5 days.

In group M2 was observed duration of mechanical allodynia in first rat first 2 weeks, second rat 5-week, third rat 5 weeks 3 days, fourth rat 2 weeks, fifth rat 7 weeks 3 days. Moreover, in the group of M3 was obtained duration of mechanical allodynia in first rat 5 weeks 3 days, second rat 5 weeks 5 days, third rat 3 weeks, fourth rat 3 weeks, fourth rat five 4 weeks.

The whole rats (100%) in group K experienced mechanical allodynia until day 35, all mice (100%) in the M1 group experienced mechanical allodynia until day 12, all mice (100%) in the M2 group experienced mechanical allodynia until day 14 and all mice (100%) in the M3 group experienced mechanical allodynia until day 21.

On day 14, 21, 28 and 35 post-SNL seemed decline in the number of mice that experienced mechanical allodynia in groups M1 and M2 than M3 group K. In the group of M3 all the rats were still experiencing mechanical allodynia at day 14 post-SNL, whereas on day 21 and day 35 the number of mice with mechanical allodynia was similar to the M2. At day 28 post-SNL it was observed a decrease in the number of mice that continued to decline ranging from group K. On day 42 post-SNL there was no difference in the number of mice that still experienced mechanical allodynia between group K with group M1. On day 49 there was no difference in the number of mice that still experienced mechanical allodynia in group K, M1 and M2.

On day 60, in all groups, none of mice (K, M1, M2, and M3) experienced the mechanical allodynia (Figure 1). If followed from the number of mice with mechanical allodynia of each group, it is shown that all of mice in the control group still experienced mechanical allodynia until day 35 post-SNL, while in the groups M1, M2, and M3 there were rats that did not experience mechanical allodynia. The average duration of mechanical allodynia experience among rats in group K was 5 weeks 1 day 9 hours 36 minutes. In addition, the average duration of mechanical allodynia experience among rats in group M1 was 5 weeks 3 1/5 day. Furthermore, rats in group M2 that experienced mechanical allodynia was 4 weeks 2 days 14 hours. Lastly, rats in group M3 experienced mechanical allodynia was 3 weeks 5 days.

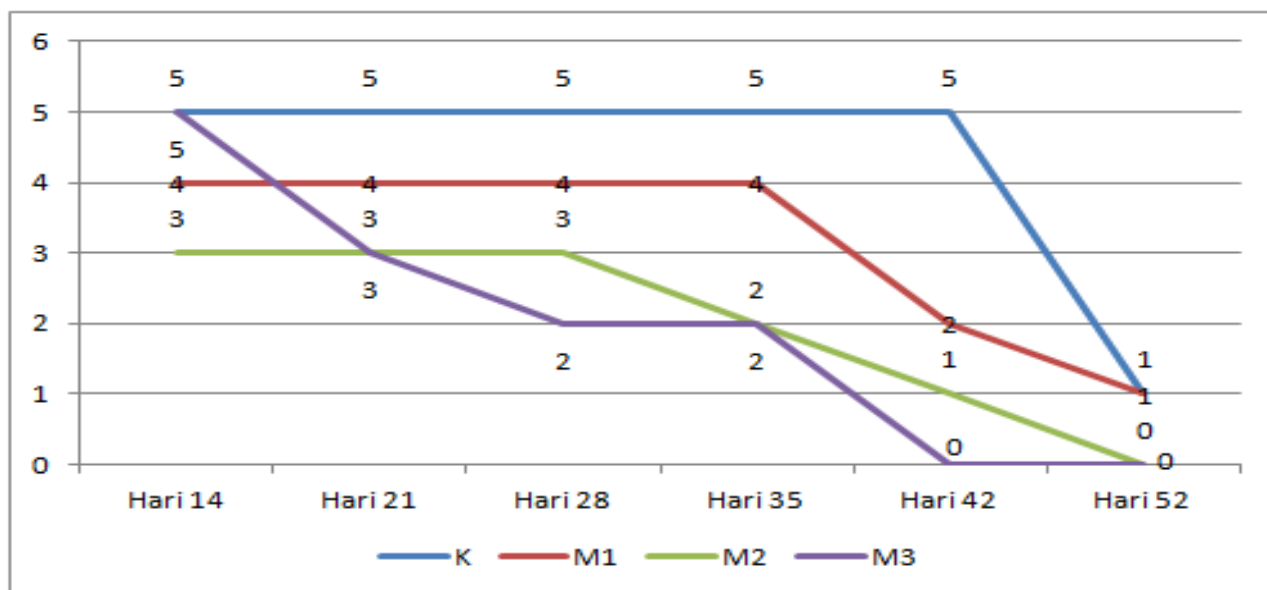


Figure 1 Graph the number of mice in each group that experienced mechanical allodynia by day post-SNL. C = control, methylcobalamin M1 = 1, M2 = methylcobalamin 2, M3 = methylcobalamin 3.

The average duration of mechanical allodynia in groups M2 and M3 is lower than the group K. The effective dose to shorten the duration of mechanical allodynia was the dose of methylcobalamin in groups M2 and M3. Statistical analysis in all four groups showed no significant difference ($p < 0.05$), statistical analysis between the two groups (K with M1, K with M2, K with M3) showed significant differences between the groups K with M3 ($p = 0.027$).

In this study, the duration of mechanical allodynia in rats from each group was different each time. The average time of mechanical allodynia (descriptively) in group K longer than the group M1, M2 and M3. This indicates that methylcobalamin can shorten the time of mechanical allodynia experienced by rats in group M1, M2 and M3, in addition, the dose of methylcobalamin also influences in shortening the duration of mechanical allodynia. Statistically significant only showed between group K with the M3 difference ($p = 0.027$).

The duration of mechanical allodynia depends on the amount of sprouting and neuroma formed at the area of injury, the process of regeneration and factors arising after inhibition after nerve injury. In this study, the nerve injury, that was done, is the same in all rats of all groups SNL left lumbar 5. The difference is whether there is an effect on the administration of methylcobalamin to nerve regeneration process as already described above. Methylcobalamin role in the synthesis of proteins for the regeneration of damaged nerve cells will shorten the duration of mechanical allodynia.

Von Frey filament numbers that cause mechanical allodynia

Von Frey filament numbers that cause mechanical allodynia in the control group was lower than the group M1, M2 and M3. It is also proved by statistically significant difference ($p = 0.007$) among the four groups. Descriptively and statistically showed a significant difference ($p = 0.007$) von Frey filament numbers that cause mechanical allodynia. These conditions indicate that 1) methylcobalamin influences mechanical strength that is given to induce mechanical allodynia, 2) the higher the dose of methylcobalamin the greater the mechanical strength required to cause mechanical allodynia.

Nerve ligation would cause mechanosensitive-hot-spot, which is very sensitive to mechanical stimuli, so that with a little knock will cause pain at sensory areas (Baron, 2009; Decosterd & Berta, 2009; Ossipov and Porreca, 2009; Meliala, 2008; McMahan et al., 2004; Dupere et al., 2003; Bridges, 2001). Biochemical processes that occur as a result of administration of methylcobalamin, the same as in the previous discussions, in which protein synthesis occurs very useful in the regeneration of neural structures, particularly peripheral nerve.

Conclusion

Methylcobalamin can slow the onset of mechanical allodynia, and methylcobalamin dosage given was also influential in slowing the onset of mechanical allodynia, mechanical allodynia duration, and number of filaments. This study found a decrease in mechanical allodynia experimental animals after nerve injury in the methylcobalamin group compared with the control group.

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